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# CULTURAL REALITY

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In the view of the author "reality" has always meant "nature." Men have been "naturalists" in their language and logic, in their science and philosophy. Religious and philosophical idealism was, indeed, a protest against this view, but a powerless protest.

At a relatively late stage of human evolution, with the increasing complexity of cultural life, arose the need of consciously controlling, not only reality, but human activities themselves, of directing, developing and organizing them. In spite, however, of strenuous efforts of many generations, the author thinks that our control of activity still remains on a very low level. The present crisis has helped us to see "that we have permitted ourselves to be blinded by the success of material science and technique and have failed to bring a consistent, self-conscious and critical, intellectual attitude into the domain of cultural science and practice."

This failure is due to the fact that in trying to control activity, men have been using the same methods and concepts which they had developed in controlling natural reality. The practical worker or the scientist who deals with human activities is at bottom a "naturalist," treats activity as a natural happening and thinks of culture, the product of activity, as a part of nature. He is forced to admit, however, that at least the higher types of activity are creative and that cultural evolution may and should be the realization of ideals. He finds at every step objects, which though real, are evidently not natural things nor processes—words, myths, poems, institutions. And yet, his naturalistic preconception is so strong that he fails to draw the proper inference from these and other facts, that nature, like everything else within the sphere of our experience and reflection, is an agglomerated product of innumerable past activities and material for future activities, and is thus only a part of a wider and changing "cultural reality."

Once this cultural character of the world is recognized, entirely new horizons are opened for science and philosophy, and the possibilities for the realization of ideals appear unlimited.

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